Aliens Among Us

A doublely alarming intuition has taken hold of my thoughts, and its multiple facets seem beautiful to me. This intuition is a flower with pastel-colored petals that, when moved by the breeze, releases small pearls of light. I say "doubly alarming" because both the possibility that it is true and the possibility that my imagination is creating it in a wild, obstinate manner seem alarming to me. This intuition is that among the human population, there exists a non-human population that, however, pretends to be human: an alien population. I will present and reflect on the idea of daily coexistence with at least one disguised alien species, considering this series of strange assumptions:

Assumption #1: Extraterrestrial intelligent species exist, so from the start, we must accept the possibility that alien life exists and is also intelligent in a way similar to our species.

Within this assumption is the one that you belong to my species; the human one.

Assumption #2: The extraterrestrials have found some purpose in interacting with us. A purpose that escapes me, but could be conducting field research on our behaviors and motivations; that is, on how we create reality and interact with it.

Assumption #3: They have managed to go beyond the barriers that physics seems to place between them and us, including the vast distance between the stars, the energy source necessary for such a journey, micrometeorites, the harmful effects of exposure to radiation and weightlessness... All of this reveals that their intelligence is not just "a little superior", but in relative terms, they must be much more advanced than us. Based on their impressive technological level, they must have a society capable of generating such technology, and therefore, it must be a society without conflicts or destructive impulses; entirely collaborative, with an unquestionable division of labor based on a principle of absolute justice and complete subordination.

This assumption could collide with number 2, as such a society would hardly find us interesting as a species. So, we could add three possibilities if they are truly among us: either we have something they find especially unique and valuable, or they simply take us as entertainment (in which case, they seem quite frivolous for their sophistication), or they are trying to affect our evolution in some way by interacting in ways we cannot understand. Or at least, ways I cannot understand.

Assumption #4: They either look physically like us (which should somehow be explained despite the vast distances) or they possess the technology to make themselves look very much like us. Technology that, although practically perfect, is not flawless, and that's why some of us realize they are among us. If it were perfect, I would never have thought to write this. I will develop the evidence that they are not like us and that their camouflage technology does not completely disguise them.

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It all started in 2022 at a high school in the department of Canelones. I was at a faculty coordination meeting at Las Piedras High School, number 1. By November, those meetings had almost no meaning left (if they ever did). The teachers, already tired and with little to share, spoke about various topics, and of course, many times, those topics had little or nothing to do with the school or the current pseudo-educational circumstances where the real student almost lies extinct. This situation repeated itself for two or three weeks, and we, the teachers, easy prey to boredom, found increasingly creative ways to stay awake during the two or three hours of coordination.

At the last one, something unusual happened, which, however, went unnoticed by most of my colleagues. We were sharing various experiences about sightings of unexplained lights in the sky. A teacher recounted, to everyone's surprise, an experience that we found fascinating and, to some, terrifying. Especially to some women in their fifties who are meticulously afraid of the unknown and exciting, because the mere thought of losing control horrifies them. The colleague told us that she lives in a rural area, and one night, in the early hours of the morning, a very bright white light began to come through her bedroom window. The light was so intense that it passed through the curtains. She looked and discovered that it was a gigantic orb, very white, sitting about thirty or forty meters from her house. Her reaction was to close everything and get into bed. Something I find quite unlikely, but the truth is, that's how her story ended, despite the indignant questions about the sudden anticlimax.

Then we talked about the possibility of infiltration; that is, that extraterrestrials were among us. One teacher, joking sadly, pointed out that he had had several "alien" students. Many said, "That's bad", "That's bad", but they laughed at the little joke.

What's curious is that, at a moment when my colleagues fell silent, I thought to say that if they were among us, in that room and at that moment, there should be some teacher who was alien. Most of my colleagues laughed uproariously, and I took the opportunity to add that if an alien were present, they surely wouldn't be laughing. And one colleague didn't laugh!

This teacher, a man in his forties, very pale with a beard and dark hair, slim, was watching me without making any gesture.

The memory of that moment still gives me goosebumps.

We had the three-month break. When I returned the following year, in March 2023 (specifically on Wednesday the 15th), I found myself alone with the colleague in the teachers' lounge. I greeted him, and he greeted me back. Then there was a prolonged silence. I observed him for a while, barely lifting my gaze from my cellphone: he wasn't reading, he wasn't looking at his phone, he wasn't reviewing his agenda; he seemed to be staring at a point in the air with a slight smile. I jokingly asked if he remembered the conversation about extraterrestrials. He quickly responded that he did. I confessed that I found his reaction to the suggestion that they might be among us very interesting. I reminded him that we all laughed, except for him. And I had said that the one who didn't laugh...

–...that the one who didn't laugh was an alien –he anticipated, widening his eyes.

–Of course –I responded, surprised that he still remembered that rather insignificant episode from the previous year–. And you didn't laugh.

–No. I didn't laugh.

–So –I continued, sure of myself–. I must assume you are an alien. But I'll ask you directly so we avoid misunderstandings: Are you an alien?

–Yes.

What impressed me the most was his expression. His gaze was harsh, cold, there was no humor, no revealing details. There was nothing. It was like a corpse.

I laughed and continued:

–And you come from far away, Mr. ET?

–Very far.

–And what are you doing here, so far from your home and in a high school in Las Piedras?

–Observing.

I laughed again and went to teach my class on *The Divine Comedy*. I couldn't stop thinking that either my colleague had an extraordinary sense of humor or I had actually been talking to an alien.

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The alien organism is positioned in a state of concealed mental isolation. It is both the same and different: it observes, influencing reality as little as possible or in very subtle ways. For them, reality is a construct, not in a metaphorical or theoretical sense, but literally a structure that persists; they understand time and space as mere contingencies and can observe the past, the present, and the future in a single instant.

Because of this, it is easy to identify a gesture on the alien's face that isn't even indifference or overwhelm; it's a gesture of distance that doesn't suggest either agreement or displeasure: it's an alien face! Their gaze is filled with nothingness. Physically, they mimic the posture and clothing that they have carefully assumed to be analogous to the average of the individuals among whom they must blend in, in such a way that no one notices there is anything particular about them. They are not attractive to humans; they shouldn't even seem interesting, since direct dialogue exposes them.

In non-trivial interaction, when a human shares their ideas, feelings, and positions on life, they interrogate the other by exposing themselves. This is especially dangerous for aliens, as they do not possess their own ideas, nor feelings as we humans understand them, and even less the ability to take a stance on a problem. If they express an opinion, you will notice that it is an empty repetition of an average; it is as if it were a discourse created by artificial intelligence. It may seem logically impeccable, but it is

precariously based on ordinary and unreliable assumptions. One notices that they are merely sentences obtained statistically; never an irregularity, never a sudden burst of imagination. Surprise has no place in that form of reasoning.

An observation that might interest you about the similarity between alien discourse and that of artificial intelligence chatbots is that both exploit the illusion of otherness. To understand it, let's think of a dog that sees itself in a mirror. It growls and barks. That animal has fallen victim to the illusion of otherness. We know there is no other dog behind the mirror, but it believes there is. Since it doesn't know its own appearance, it cannot recognize itself, so it sees another dog in its own reflection. It's exactly the same as what happens with an artificial intelligence chatbot. Since it expresses itself in a way similar to how a human would, we tend to believe it is human, but we know it's not.

It is also a beautiful case of the reversibility of relationships. A concept I introduced in the previous reading.

It also happens that the illusion of otherness is present in interpersonal relationships: when we express an emotion, we expect that emotion to be understood in the way we experience it, but it is understood as others experience it.

And just as we feel, we believe that the being in front of us feels too, but their reactions could be pure exteriority.

The alien, then, must avoid any situation of intimacy with a real human being. They know they are vulnerable to suspicion and that even a moderately severe examination will reveal the fact that they do not know what they are talking about when they say "love", "hate", "tiredness", "overwhelm", "happiness", "pleasure".

I fear I have even detected that there are differences among them. For example, some (perhaps a more advanced species, perhaps individuals who have been among us longer and are therefore better trained) exhibit a proactive attitude; they try to imitate a cynic, a pessimist, a person depressed and tired of the absurdity of life. But with a little suspicion, it becomes evident that it's all a lie; they are mechanically repeating models designed through their previous interactions.

The same thing happens with political discourse: always an endless and monotonous repetition of clichés.

I have noticed a certain attitude of waiting, of covert lurking. When the opportunity arises, they ask questions and wait, above all else; waiting is the foundation of their observation strategy. They watch, but when they must interact, they create long silences. Don't think it's just strategy, it's that the aliens truly do not have a personal opinion on anything.

Physically, they tend to be rather insignificant. Not only unattractive, but they also try to go unnoticed. Someone truly ugly attracts attention; from ugliness to insignificance, there is a big gap. The insignificant one, though physically visible because light bounces off them, seems as if they really aren't there. To avoid drawing attention and being suspected, they adopt a frankly vulgar appearance.

I, who find beauty in almost anything or anyone, fear I have unwittingly entered into some kind of sentimental relationship with non-human intelligences.

If physical insignificance and the lack of personal opinion (and sense of humor: humor is totally mysterious to them) are two clearly recognizable traits in undercover aliens, we can also discover them because, apparently, they are incapable of denying that they are aliens. That is, although they would never admit it voluntarily, if directly questioned on the matter, they will be unable to deny it.

Perhaps —now that I think about it— this attitude is part of some sort of contract or pact between the invading species, in which it is stipulated that these beings will not openly lie about their nature, but will simply observe. And that, in case they are discovered, displaying an extremely curious moral scruple, they must admit their identity with rigorous nobility.

Another test: now imagine two people in a small space; an elevator, a lobby of a building, a waiting room. There are subjects who you might suppose will talk to each other even if they don't know each other. They will talk about the weather, pain, crime, football, the price of tomatoes… place two people in that space and imagine who would be incapable of communicating. They wouldn't comment on anything. Imagine them. Did you identify people with those traits? Well, they are aliens.

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After the events I narrated, I saw my colleague several more times, but we never spoke. We simply greeted each other from afar, and each went about their routine tasks.

In 2024, I shared the teacher's lounge with him again, at the Liceo Número 1 de Sauce in the department of Canelones. We talked about other things, leaving behind those idle and delirious situations from Las Piedras. However, I always had the impression that this person was silently observing me; even with a strange gesture of complicity that I'm sure I didn't reciprocate.

The truth is that the year came to an end, and we had meetings. On the day of the meeting in which he also participated, I walked in and saw him, seemingly hidden, just behind the door.

–"But professor!" I exclaimed, joking. "What are you doing there?"

And I extended my hand.

It was an icy contact, as if it were a doll; the touch of a dry hand devoid of circulation.

–"You have cold hands!" I said.

–"Don't forget that I come from another planet", he replied.

I looked at my colleagues, but they didn't seem to notice what the professor had said. Or at least, they took it as a joke. The only thing I managed to say, to close the conversation, was:

–"Stop with that!"

A fair request, if you look at it that way, since after many hours of absurd reflections, my colleague had thrown me the joke. Assuming, of course, that it was a joke.

But the connection and reflection I will make shortly will erase the instinctive smile that you might have drawn on your face when thinking that a professor, a grown man like me, could believe he lives among extraterrestrials; that I had fallen for such a silly joke, and that this silliness was enough for me to now write a text characterizing – the height of absurdity! – the appearance and behavior of the supposed extraterrestrials infiltrated into our society. Because... you will say, in the already absurd case that there really are extraterrestrials among us: wouldn't they have better places to investigate than the towns of Canelones, Uruguay? And I would quickly answer: why not investigate the towns of Canelones, Uruguay? Aren't the inhabitants of Canelones, Uruguay, human beings just like anywhere else? What's at play here is not my gullibility, but rather your inferiority complex compared to the inhabitants of other places like New York, London, or Barcelona.

And you will continue by saying: sure, but notice that there are many introverted people, with a very strange sense of humor, who mock your inability to separate reality from fantasy. I would quickly reply, if that were the case, they would be indistinguishable from extraterrestrial entities that couldn't completely deceive us.

And you would say: assuming they are extraterrestrials, they could come from distances we can hardly imagine, and they can't deceive us by posing as human beings without us noticing; don't you find that strange? No, I would answer, I don't find it strange because we, even though we might not be aware of it, when interacting with another human being, we are able to perceive their soul; a state of existence that is not physical and completes the whole of what is perceived. Some would call it "character", others "charisma". But the truth is that this level of existence "floats" mysteriously around people when we interact. It's the soul. Period.

Regarding unimaginable distances and overcoming physical barriers – a rather crude and naive way of "proving" that it would not be possible for them to be among us – think of the field of aeronautics. Even quite late into the 19th century, there were not many who believed that humans could fly, aside from the sad hot air balloons. And no revolution in physics was needed to conceive that the wing could keep heavy devices in the air. With the same physics that makes tree branches sway; with the same physics that we use every day or that keeps our biological processes running, not only did we learn to fly, but we've mastered flight to the point that it's now completely familiar to board a plane or see it pass at heights that two hundred years ago would have seemed impossible to reach.

We fall asleep without problems at 10,000 meters above the ground.

The same thing has happened with the arrival of humans to the Moon and other surprising achievements, which, though surprising, are merely consequences of the exploration of available resources, both in terms of materials and technique and theory.

Imagine what we could do with a new physics, based on principles we can barely glimpse. What kind of miracles could an advanced species perform, not in a thousand or two thousand years, but in hundreds of thousands or millions of years?

Regarding charisma, that is a true exploratory challenge. They cannot generate it; they simply do not have it. So, when they try to create the illusion of a charismatic, transcendent existence beyond the physical dimension, they fail despite their immense technological development. There are limitations in play that might be unimaginable to us, such as the fact that an extraterrestrial species might not be capable of feeling.

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The reversibility of relationship was introduced in the previous reading. It was established that a set of information can be interpreted in various ways when linked with different types of information. You mentioned shy, introverted humans with an unusual sense of humor. I would add "insignificant", with no personal opinion or interests. I've said that they would be indistinguishable from non-human individuals in disguise. You dismissed the theory, which sounds a little outlandish, as a conspiracy theory at first. But let's take a closer look at the issue.

According to the fundamental principle of reversibility of relationship, A and non-A can be non-A and A. In other words, there is the possibility of renaming entities on either side of the boundary. However, it should also be noted that a certain amount of information can be increased by appending specific information (say, to the right), or by appending other specific information (say, to the left). Let's clarify, it's always worth mentioning, that in this case "right" and "left" are not political definitions. In this case, because they very well could be. So, if we start from the idea that aliens do not visit us and that even less they intersperse among us, it becomes absurd to even consider the possibility of a typology.

But by removing this impossibility and increasing the information by adding certain experiences and speculations, it turns out that these "extraterrestrials" become visible, present, alarmingly vivid.

Humans, I am told, can be more insignificant and lack more charisma than one might assume, but that doesn't make them extraterrestrials. This is probably true, but in their way, those people also observe us, as they find the charisma in others curious, a charisma they lack and envy.

It is, however, true that under the available evidence, both possibilities are equally explanatory. Nevertheless, to accept the extraterrestrial hypothesis, we must overlook a series of prior judgments; cancel active fields in our underlying theories; powerful personal fields.

There is something else regarding a closing reflection for this anomalous text about hidden aliens in our social fabric, right in front of us.

Observing habits, behaviors, beliefs, knowledge, and passions of the majority of people, and how they react intuitively and in a "school-like" manner (I know the adjective doesn't exist, but it's excellent for describing a thoughtless, collective, coordinated movement), it is inevitable, at times, to feel like a complete stranger, an alien exiled on a barren, dark planet with no possibility of redemption.

The universe, which is not out there, separate, but right here; which is not even between us but within us; the universe, I say, is strange and mysterious. It works like a machine that produces astonishment, and I want to say here that it is not that it wakes us with a reaction of awe, but that it produces it, generates it, exactly like machinery. Because in addition to being astonishing, it looks at itself and is amazed. That circularity of astonishment is, of course, astonishing in itself.

Before I finish, I would like to share a memory with you. It also involves an episode with an alien at the Liceo 1 in Sauce. And I want to share it because I think it helps complete the complex picture I've been talking about.

We had finished a meeting and there was another one I wasn't going to participate in. So, I went to the library and sat with my phone. When I looked up, I saw at a nearby table an Astronomy professor I had met a few years before at the same school. Eight years earlier, to be precise. We had crossed paths there in 2016.

More than once, we had talked in the hallways. He was a strange man who gave me the impression that he avoided personal contact and couldn't even stand looking people in the eyes. I always had the impression that he didn't know where to put his hands, so he carried a folder with him. He held it like a shield.

He wandered the hallways looking at the bulletin boards he had seen a thousand times, and I never saw him enter the teacher's lounge.

I went to sit next to him. He had that black folder on the table.

—What are you doing? —I asked with a smile.

—How's it going, professor?

—Good, good —I answered, showing the palms of my hands—. Killing time.

—What's new? —he asked.

—Seeing if I should buy a telescope —I commented— A few years ago, I had one, but I sold it. It was good for the price.

—Refractor or reflector?

—Refractor.

—Ah. Reflectors are much better. Though more expensive —he informed me.

—Yes. That's why I bought a refractor. And you could see Saturn's rings and Jupiter's bands… and I saw the Galilean moons and everything. Five hundred dollars. But I sold it for emotional reasons.

—I don't want to ask. But that's curious.

—I've always been interested in stargazing —I continued—. I think it's important to look up. Like García Lorca once said. And then, they killed him.

—I do stargazing trips and we observe the stars —he began telling me, not listening—. We had a working group and I even gave several talks at different schools. There was a time when I was also interested in the issue of livestock mutilation. We went to some farms… But in the end, we stopped because of the pandemic.

—Sorry —I interrupted him—. Professor, I don't doubt your logic, but I don't see the connection between stargazing and livestock mutilation. Unless…

—Aliens —he said, in a confessional tone.

I swallowed.

—Do you believe it? —I asked, also lowering my voice.

—There's no other explanation —he whispered, opening his eyes wide.

—I'm sure there must be one…

The professor shrugged.

—If you had seen what I've seen, you wouldn't have any doubts either. Bare bones, but without scratches. Completely dry cow bodies, no blood, no genitals. Tongues ripped out, cut like with a laser. Clean incisions, no violence. The corpses didn't attract flies or have worms. They just disintegrated over time. The ants didn't even eat them. I saw it. Nobody told me about it.

—The chupacabras? —I said.

—Nonsense. In San Ramón?

—Okay —I answered—. I admit it's quite a curiosity. But, look, couldn't the aliens raise their own cows and do whatever they wanted with them?

—I don't know about that. The only thing I know is that there are no rational explanations. There aren't any unless you factor in the voluntary action of an intelligence. An intelligence with very superior tools. Doing things we can't understand. Don't you believe in aliens?

Overcoming my initial surprise at something as clumsily forced as that conversation about alien beings dissecting Holsteins and Herefords, I decided to accept the challenge of the undoubted intergalactic traveler.

—I believe —I began, confident in my words—. I am convinced that not only do they come to experiment with animal tissues, but just as they experiment with them, they do it with us as well. They also cut our bodies and study them in depth. Moreover, they do this with our society, with our customs, with our behavior in general. They are intrigued by how we feel, how we think, what drives us to continue with our insignificant lives. They cut, in short, our souls as well.

—How deep, professor. Continue.

—They want to know what the soul is. Because they don't have one —I continued, excited—. Their society must be so advanced that, if they ever had one, they lost it. And they can't go back. Or better yet: they don't want to go back. But their scientific curiosity is exacerbated. Perhaps they only exist for the exploration of the universe.

—Wonderful. And what else do you know?

—They must have an absolutely functional society, without disagreements or rebellions. A society where every individual is born knowing what place they will occupy until the end of their days, and is completely content with that place. They must not have relationships or parenthood. That's very primitive. They don't have sexuality, money, or personal property. They don't envy, hate, love, or fear. They don't believe in death because they've understood the behavior of matter to such an inconceivable extent that they know that dying means nothing. They are their own god or, better yet, they've known God, they've reached him, and he's spoken to them; he helps them develop technology. Matter obeys them. Where we would need to place two gears to make a machine work, they modify the materials' structure at a subatomic level and the machine simply does what it's told without hesitation. A machine that, before our eyes, would make no sense.

The professor smiled slightly and said:

—It's interesting —I saw him stretch his hands and grab the black folder—. But I must disagree with you on some points. If I'm not mistaken, you're proposing a kind of futuristic utopia located at the edge of space, because you're also talking about our society through the alien model. And that society isn't a utopia; it's more of the opposite, a dystopia. You judge certain human traits as defects of the species; weaknesses that are not weaknesses at all. According to you, a society capable of sustaining such advanced science wouldn't have sexual relations, so it would face some problems with reproduction.

—Remember that sex is not just a pastime. That social immobility, so medieval, reminds me of ants: we are born soldiers, we die soldiers; we are born workers, we die workers. And we will never aspire to anything else. But aspirations are the engine of a society; they drive us to improve, and we make that improvement by sacrificing ourselves. Without sacrifice for personal needs, there would be no organized society.

I observed my colleague's gestures and noticed that he spoke as if reciting. He himself didn't believe a word of what he said. He was reproducing a flat discourse, without emotions, which was perhaps a

synthesis of what was expected, of the average, of the most vulgar aspects of human thought. At times, to disguise it, he would temper his statements with smiles, but he only smiled with his mouth, never with his eyes.

—Your fantasy is very interesting —he continued—. But, for example, it requires the belief in the existence of God, and even more so, it links an advanced society with belief in God in such a way that they become two extremes of the same thing. You told me that aliens don't have a soul but believe in God, which strikes me as very paradoxical. Are there beings without a soul who still believe in God? Why would we have a soul and they not? Is the God they believe in the same as ours? I mean, the God of the Jews, because I'm Jewish…

—I don't know that —I answered—. But what's behind it is a severe analysis of our society and how our potentials and shortcomings either hinder or generate certain characteristics of our collective existence. For example: we are monogamous because we are territorial. We don't like people touching what's ours, so we have private property. Then, we build societies around private property and the trade of certain goods we desire. If we removed our shortcomings and needs, we wouldn't have to evaluate our society using the same criteria as before; it would be an entirely new society. You shouldn't evaluate the alien society in anthropocentric, anthropomorphic, or anthropological terms. Here, we're talking about something else: imagine that they discovered how to completely eliminate sexual desire. Imagine they found a way to eliminate territoriality, envy, the need in all its forms, aging, symbolism, the traps of language; that their society had managed to overcome successive cataclysms and the individuals left behind had been genetically modified in a massive way to occupy their place. And this had happened not once or twice, but dozens or hundreds of times. Without politics, without religion, without commerce; everyone working for exploration, all feeding in the same way; all functional to a single goal: to explore and evolve from that exploration. Without art, without philosophy, without sports, without any distractions; optimizing existence time to the maximum.

—That's horrible, professor —he stated, and stood up—. For a human, perhaps —I accepted—. For a Western human. Ask the Chinese if their society isn't like that. For now —I continued—, what we can be sure of is that they hate having to load cows onto their ships.

—That's true. Very true —said the Astronomy professor. He placed the black folder under his arm and left the library with large strides.

I never saw him again.